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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9167

INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 5840

RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 3140

RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 7001

RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 4245

RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1538

RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 1515

RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 3779

RUEHQD/AMEMBASSY QUITO 4178

RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 8724

RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL

RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP

RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC

RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 001283

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/12/2016

TAGS: ECON PGOV PREL BL

SUBJECT: SLOW START FOR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY CAMPAIGNS

Classified By: Charge D'Affairs Kimberly DeBlauw for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The Constituent Assembly campaign is off to an unimpressive start; campaign season opened May 2 but political parties, perhaps taking their cues from a fatigued electorate, or perhaps hindered by a lack of funding, have done little to educate voters about their candidates or positions. The MAS is planning to kick off its campaign in the Chapare on May 18 with "the most impressive event the MAS has organized to date," with honored guests Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Peruvian presidential hopeful Ollanta Humala. Overworked National Electoral Court (CNE) officials continue to be cognizant of scrutiny from the executive branch, but are striving to deliver the July 2 Constituent Assembly election on a tight budget. CNE President Salvador Romero reports that the Venezuelan-sponsored drive to issue identification documents to marginalized Bolivians and to register them to vote for MAS candidates in the July election had minimal impact. End summary.

¶2. (C) The Constituent Assembly (CA) campaign is off to an unimpressive start; campaign season opened May 2 but political parties, perhaps taking their cues from a fatigued electorate (due to the December national elections), or perhaps hindered by a lack of funding, have done little to educate voters about their candidates or positions. While Congress recently approved state funding for political parties competing in the CA election, political party insiders tell us that they will have to use the funding to pay outstanding debts from the December election instead of for the current campaign.

¶3. (C) While opposition political parties struggle to organize, the MAS will kick off its campaign in the Chapare on May 18 with "the most impressive event the MAS has organized to date," with honored guests Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Peruvian presidential hopeful Ollanta Humala. Organizers are planning for over 100,000 persons to attend--cocaleros, government officials and select ambassadors-- all to hear Chavez (and perhaps a Cuban representative) share their "experiences" regarding constituent assemblies and nationalization of natural resources.

¶4. (C) Overworked National Electoral Court (CNE) officials continue to be cognizant of scrutiny from the executive branch, but are striving to deliver the July 2 Constituent Assembly election on a tight budget. Two of the three remaining justices cited political pressure from the executive branch as a cause for concern, and told us that former CNE President Oscar Hassenteufel resigned because of such pressure. The justices said they have the minimal resources necessary to organize the July 2 election (thanks in part to support from Holland and Canada), but that they could do more with more. They report that the GOB has not yet invited observers, but that they expect European Union and OAS observers to participate. (NOTE: The GOB has expressed interest in EU observers, but it's unclear whether a formal invitation has been issued. END NOTE). The International Organization of Migration has also expressed interest in sending an observer mission. CNE President Romero found their interest odd, but said all observers are welcome.

¶5. (C) Romero also said the Venezuelan-sponsored drive to issue identification documents to marginalized Bolivians and to register them to vote for MAS candidates in the July election had a minimal impact. Minister of Government Alicia Munoz told poloff separately that the GOB had issued carnets to 45,000 Bolivians, but that the program had run out of money. Comment: Since the deadline for voter registration has passed, there is little GOB (or GOV) incentive to continue the program. End comment.

DEBLAUW